III Marine Expeditionary Force

Unit Cohesion Brief to EFPB

28 March 2012

Problem

- **Persistent misconduct**
  - **discipline, hazing, suicide, poor equipment accountability, sexual assault, safety, substance abuse…**
- **Related to:**
  - **Unit cohesion**
  - **Leader turnover**
  - **Leader actions**
- **Root cause – degraded COMMAND CLIMATE**
- **This is a combined effect of *leaders <u>and</u> leadership***

III MEF Survey Results: Challenges

- **Universal challenges:**
- **Individual augments / service augments**
  - **Emphasis on mid-grade leadership**
- **Section / Team deployments**
  - **Disrupt standing unit cohesion**
- **Result – Personnel churn at all levels**

III MEF Survey Results: Challenges

- **III MEF specific challenges:**
- **Geographic dispersion – 5 time zones / IDL**
- **Short tours**
  - **12 / 24 month tours**
  - **1st term Marines (junior corporals, few / junior sergeants)**
- **Operational tempo**
  - **Over 70 exercises / events each year**
  - **Small unit / task organized deployments**
  - **Geographically diverse training sites – limited home training**
  - **Conferences and enablers – mid grade leader heavy**
- **31st MEU operating model**
- **Result – *Enhanced* personnel churn at all levels**

Leadership

- **A decade of war has developed phenomenal operational / combat leadership**
- **Tactically and technically superb**
- **Reduced emphasis on home station (garrison) leadership**
  - **Dwell = time to “reset,” “decompress”**
  - **Time to reconnect with families (Mid-grade leaders)**
  - **Time to shift leaders IOT stabilize for deployments (concentrated turnover)**
- **Results – Diminished leader engagement, degraded command climate in garrison**

Institutional Response

- **We have attacked the symptoms with programs:**
  - **Force Preservation Boards**
  - **Take a Stand**
  - **Alcohol abatement / substance abuse programs & resources**
  - **Hazing policies and education**
  - **Safety program improvements**
  - **Formalized mentorship programs**
  - **III MEF Liberty Campaign Plan**

- **Holistic approach is needed**

Recommendations

- **Reinvigorate development of junior / midgrade leaders**
- **Revive emphasis on small unit leadership in <u>all contexts</u>, in combat and at home station**
  - **Formal settings – PME, etc.**
  - **Persistent messaging – articulate and reinforce expectations from leaders at all levels. Words reflected in actions.**
- **Hold leaders accountable**
- **Expect increased identification of incidents to precede reduction**
- **Reset expectations for leaders – *Get left of the incident.* Engaged leaders must use existing tools (programs, admin, legal) proactively, not just reactively.**
- **End result – Revive culture of leadership, culture of compliance in all times and all contexts**